

22 March 1978

media
S10

Mitchell denies he saw 2 reports on Korea affair

By LYNNE OLSON

Washington Bureau of The Sun

Washington—John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general, yesterday testified he did not see two 1971 FBI reports sent to him implicating the South Korean government in an influence-buying operation on Capitol Hill.

Testifying for the first time since his Watergate conviction, Mitchell assured the House International Relations Subcommittee that if he had received the reports, he "most assuredly" would have ordered an investigation.

However, Mitchell said, he did recall another FBI memo warning that two congressional staff aides were connected with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency.

After getting the top-secret report, he said, he went to Capitol Hill October 14, 1971, to meet with former Representative Carl Albert (D., Okla.), then speaker of the House and employer of one of the aides.

"I discussed the contents of the memorandum with the speaker," Mitchell said. "I don't know what action the speaker took. His reaction was rather passive."

Mitchell referred to the party in question as a "nice young lady . . . who was employed in a non-sensitive job."

Although the Albert aide was not mentioned, Mitchell was presumably referring to Suzi Park Thomson, who stayed on Mr. Albert's staff until his retirement last year. Mrs. Thomson has repeatedly denied having KCIA connections.

Mitchell, 64, who is serving a one-to-four-year sentence for his role in the Watergate coverup, is on a three-month furlough because of operations on his heart and hip. Although he limped slightly as he

walked to the witness table, the former attorney general appeared fit and rested, answering questions for about an hour in a strong, vigorous voice.

The subcommittee, headed by Representative Donald M. Fraser (D., Minn.), is holding a series of hearings to investigate how much Nixon administration officials knew about Korean bribery in Congress. Last week, Mr. Fraser charged that top Nixon officials received detailed intelligence reports about the Korean operation but did little to stop it.

The subcommittee yesterday released censored summaries of the three FBI memos, which were sent to both Mitchell and Henry A. Kissinger, then national security adviser to President Nixon. Mr. Kissinger may testify before the subcommittee next month.

The two memos Mitchell said he did not see alleged that:

- The office of President Park Chung-hee of South Korea "was directly involved in directing the contribution of several hundred thousand dollars to the Democratic party."

- Tongsun Park, the wealthy Korean rice broker indicted for bribery, was acting under KCIA direction but was not a KCIA employee as such, and made payments to a congressman with money received in rice deals.

The name of the congressman was deleted from the summary, but sources said it was former Representative Richard Hanna (D., Calif.), who pleaded guilty Friday to a conspiracy charge in the case.

- The South Korean government "has spent large sums to develop control over American and Korean journalists in the United States."

According to documents released by the subcommittee, the FBI came to the conclusion that "criminal activities are strongly indicated, warranting bureau investigation." But because of the extremely sensitive nature of the information, the FBI decided an investigation was precluded unless the attorney general specifically

requested it.

Mitchell said that if he had seen the intelligence reports, he would have called the U.S. intelligence agency providing the information and seen to it that the restrictions on an investigation were lifted.

He said he did not know why the top-secret reports, which an FBI official testified were sent to his office, did not reach him.

"All I know is that the files down here in Washington are filled with memoranda that were never sent," Mitchell said.

The former attorney general added that he took no further action on the memo about the congressional aides, other than to talk to Mr. Albert, because "we were dealing with a separate branch of government that should take care of its own problems."

He said he did not consult with the other congressman whose aide was suspected of having KCIA ties, because the congressman was then under criminal investigation.

He presumably was referring to former Representative Cornelius E. Gallagher (D., N.J.), who was later sent to jail for a political fund violation. One of his aides, Kim Kwang, has been linked to the KCIA.

Ex-Korean Embassy aide testifies about suspicions

Washington (AP)—A former official of the South Korean Embassy testified yesterday that he had suspicions about Hanchu C. Kim, a Korea-born businessman to whom, he said, he had given \$600,000 to be used for currying congressional favor.

"There was no result measured by the amount of money given to him for his activities," said Sang Keun Kim. "Things just didn't add up in terms of where or when."

Sang Keun Kim was a witness on the second day of Hanchu Kim's trial. Hanchu Kim is charged with conspiracy to defraud the United States by plotting to interfere with the uncorrupted workings of Congress.

Sang Keun Kim testified he had given Hanchu Kim \$600,000 in two equal payments on orders of the Korean CIA.